

**ART IN AMERICA**  
*AND ELSEWHERE*  
AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE  
PUBLISHED BI-MONTHLY

VOLUME SEVENTEEN

EDITED BY  
WILHELM R. VALENTINER  
AND  
FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN



NEW YORK  
FIVE SEVENTY-EIGHT MADISON AVENUE  
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VOLUME  
17

DECEMBER, 1928

NUMBER  
I

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## CONTENTS

STUDIES ON GIUSEPPE MARIA CRESPI

PART ONE

By Dr. Victor Lasareff



GEORGES DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR

By Dr. Hermann Voss



FANTIN-LATOUR 1836-1904

By Jan-Topass



EUGENE SPEICHER

By Walter Gutman



A NEW RAPHAEL FOR AMERICA

By Walter Heil



NORWEGIAN LANDSCAPES

BY WILLIAM H. SINGER

By Frederic Fairchild Sherman



PUBLISHED AT  
105 MIDDLE STREET, PORTLAND, MAINE, AND  
578 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER OCTOBER 4, 1922, AT THE POST OFFICE AT PORTLAND, MAINE,  
UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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FIG. 1. CRESPI: ST. FRANCESCA WITH ANGELS AND CONFESSOR  
*Collection of Dr. Haussmann, Berlin*



FIG. 2. CRESPI: THE HOLY FAMILY  
*Pitti Gallery, Florence*



ART IN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE  
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VOLUME XVII · NUMBER 1 · DECEMBER 1928



STUDIES ON GIUSEPPE MARIA CRESPI

PART ONE

BY VICTOR LASAREFF  
*Moscow, U. S. S. R.*

ALTHOUGH the *oeuvre* of Giuseppe Maria Crespi (1665-1747) has more than once been made the subject of research,<sup>1</sup> the principal questions connected with this artist, such as the chronology of his works, the genesis of his style, the evolution of his technique, have not as yet been properly elucidated. Crespi's exclusive originality, his great picturesque temperament, expressed in the broad bold handling and the rich lights and shade of his paintings, the subtlety of his colouristic gift enabling him to draw from a laconic colour-scheme an endless va-

<sup>1</sup> Ricci. Un dipinto dello Spagnuolo a Bruxelles. *Rassegna d'Arte*, 1922, pp. 105-106; Marangoni. Giuseppe Maria Crespi detto lo Spagnuolo. *Dedalo*, 1921, pp. 575-591, 647-668; Voss. Giuseppe Maria Crespi. *Biblioteca d'Arte*, Roma; Modigliani. Dipinti inediti del Crespi "Lo Spagnolo." *Dedalo*, 1923, pp. 415-423; Malaguzzi-Valeri. La R. Pinacoteca di Bologna riordinata. *Bulletino d'Arte*, 1925, pp. 140-143; Bloch, V. La pittura italiana a Berlino. *Vita Artistica*, Nr. 8-9, 1927, pp. 174, 178, 179; Malaguzzi Valeri. Un pittore burlone. *Strenna storica bolognese*. Bologna, 1928, pp. 42-50; Il ritratto italiano dal Caravaggio al Tiepolo alla Mostra di Palazzo Vecchio. Bergamo, 1927, pp. 48-49.

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riety of tones — all these traits assign to the master a place apart in the Bolognese school. However, it would be a great mistake to completely dissociate the artist from purely Bolognese traditions, locating the roots of his style in Venice. If the latter exercised a certain influence on Crespi, this influence was not fated to become a determining factor in his artistic evolution. The painter's early works show clearly how closely he was connected with the purely Bolognese tradition, which determined the principal characteristics of his graceful, lightly mannered art, that absorbed organically a number of academic elements.

Giuseppe Maria Crespi begins to work independently in the second half of the 'eighties. At about this date the Bolognese school begins to turn from the heavy forms full of inner significance of the Carraci and their school towards lighter and more graceful ones that seem to stand on the threshold of the approaching Rococo. These tendencies are already noticeable in the works of Albani, who revives in his own original way the bucolic ideals of late hellenism. In the works of Cagnacci, Cignani and Franceschini the refinement of form continues to increase — the figures become elegant and fragile, the play of light and shade airy and transparent, the colouring lighter and more differentiated. A similar process may be observed more or less in all the other Italian schools towards the end of the seicento. It is enough to recall the names of Francesco Trevisani, Michele Rocca and Giovanni Paolo Pannini for Rome,<sup>2</sup> of Solimena for Naples, of Magnasco for Genoa, of Sebastiano Ricci and Amigoni for Venice to make it clear in what measure the process was common to all the Italian schools of painting at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries. The transition to the refined forms of the Rococo was very sharply defined in Venetian art, almost all the artistic principles of the eighteenth century finding expression in the *oeuvre* of Amigoni.<sup>3</sup> In Rome and Bologna the border-line between the seicento and the settecento was much more feebly marked inasmuch as these two cities could never completely forego the exigencies of architectonic monumental style. In their art, therefore, the Rococo-period was very short-lived and anaemic, differing little from the Classicism which immediately followed it. But although the bent towards the new style was only slightly expressed in Bolognese painting at the end of the seventeenth century, its approach was nevertheless an inevitable fact, resulting from the whole habit of the epoch. Crespi's works are a particularly apt il-

<sup>2</sup> cf. Voss. Die Malerei des Barock in Rom, Berlin, pp. 614-638.

<sup>3</sup> cf. Voss. Jacopo Amigoni und die Anfänge des Rokoko in Venedig. Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen, 1918, pp. 145-170.



FIG. 3. CRESPI: CUPIDS PLAYING WITH SLEEPING NYMPHS

*Collection of Count Contini, Rome*



FIG. 4. CRESPI: SCENE IN A WINE-CELLAR

*Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow*





lustration of this. This artist logically closes the line of Bolognese Rococo, transmuting into a finished programme the disunited and casual elements that figured in the works of Albani, Cagnacci, Cignani and Franceschini. The grace and loveliness typical for Crespi's artistic conception are most closely connected with the purest Bolognese traditions deriving from these masters, who, their classical tastes notwithstanding, seem to have forestalled by some decades the ideals of the approaching Rococo. And in this respect Crespi is their logical successor and continuator.

Along with this first Bolognese source the art of Crespi has roots in another, purely local tradition. I mean the naturalistic and partly luministic line of development which goes from the early works of Guercino with their sharply expressed Caravaggesque elements and highly developed "spotted" light and shade to the works of such masters as Domenico M. Canuti, Pasinelli and Burrini. From Guercino Crespi took his dark greenish-brown colouring and the warm light and shade wrapping all the forms in its soft veil. Burrini influenced him in the respect of broad picturesque handling resulting from brilliant vivacious strokes of the brush. Finally from Canuti and Pasinelli Crespi inherited the love for the greenish flesh-tints and the gliding brownish shadows so typical for most of his works. All these artists prepared the way for Crespi, directing his attention towards the solution of the purely picturesque and luministic problems which are to play later on a predominant part in the master's work. The influence of Rembrandt, noted by the historiographers of the eighteenth century and commonly considered by their initiative as the principal source of Crespi's art, never was a determining factor in the latter's artistic evolution. It is to be felt only in later years when Crespi was already a completely mature painter. Genetically, Crespi wholly belongs to the Bolognese school, where the roots of his artistic being are deeply embedded.

The early works of Crespi are particularly convincing in this respect. The difficulties are great in picking them out from the bulk of his *oeuvre*, as the painter hardly ever dated his works. Moreover, as Zanotti<sup>4</sup> notes, one of the most characteristic aspects of Crespi's original gift was his skill in "variar maniere." This circumstance makes it very difficult to establish a precise chronology for his pictures, as there always remains the possibility that at one and the same period the master worked in quite different styles, according to the prototype he was at the time imitating or the artistic effect he was pursuing. That is why

<sup>4</sup> Zanotti. *Storia dell'Accademia Clementina*. Bologna, 1739, II. pp. 71.

the dating of Crespi's pictures proposed below should be considered as approximately only and on no account as an attempt to solve definitely the problem of the precise chronology of his works, which appears to me in relation to Crespi not only difficult but methodologically inadmissible.

Crespi received his first lessons in painting from Angelo Michele Toni. Then he entered the school of Canuti, and afterwards worked some time under Cignani and still later under Burrini. This period of Crespi's apprenticeship falls in the 'eighties, when he first appears as an independent master. Zanotti and Luigi Crespi say that the painter simultaneously copied and studied the works of Carracci, Barocci and Guercino. At the end of the 'eighties Crespi undertook at the expense of his protector Giovanni Ricci a journey to Venice, Modena, Parma, Pesaro and Urbino where the works of Titian, Veronese and Barocci particularly attracted his attention. On his return to Bologna Crespi was obliged to go once more to Venice, because of a quarrel with Conte Malvasia. Returning shortly to Bologna he then went in 1691 to Pistoia. It was at about this time that he executed the remarkable frescoes in the Palazzo Pepoli in Bologna, showing that towards the beginning of the 'nineties Crespi was already a fully matured artist. This gives us the right to consider the 'eighties as the period of formation in Crespi's style, as he was diligently digesting at that period a number of counteracting influences.

Luigi Crespi<sup>5</sup> gives as the date of one of his father's earliest works the year 1684 (the altar-piece for the church Spirito Santo representing the Crucifixion of the ten thousand martyrs). In the year 1690 he places the Saint Anthony flagellated by the demons (S. Niccolò degli Alberi, Bologna). This latter work, rather dry in handling, executed in a dark colour scheme, betrays in the types and the whole composition a direct connection with the academic tradition. I am also disposed to assign to the period of the 'eighties the following pictures of a relatively dry execution and somewhat light colouring which has not as yet absorbed the local tints: The Annunciation in the Oratorio di S. Luigi, Bologna (two ovals); S. Giacinta in glory and the Virgin in the Galleria Corsini, Rome; San Francesca Romana with angels and a confessor in the collection of Dr. Haussmann, Berlin (Fig. 1), closely related to the foregoing picture and mentioned by Zanotti (*op. cit.* II, p. 64); four "paternità" in S. Paolo, Bologna; The Miracle of S. Francesco Saverio, The Vision of St. Stanislaus and half-figure of S. Francesco de Regis in

<sup>5</sup> L. Crespi. *Vite de pittori bolognesi non descritte nella Felsina Pittrice.* Roma, 1769, p. 202.

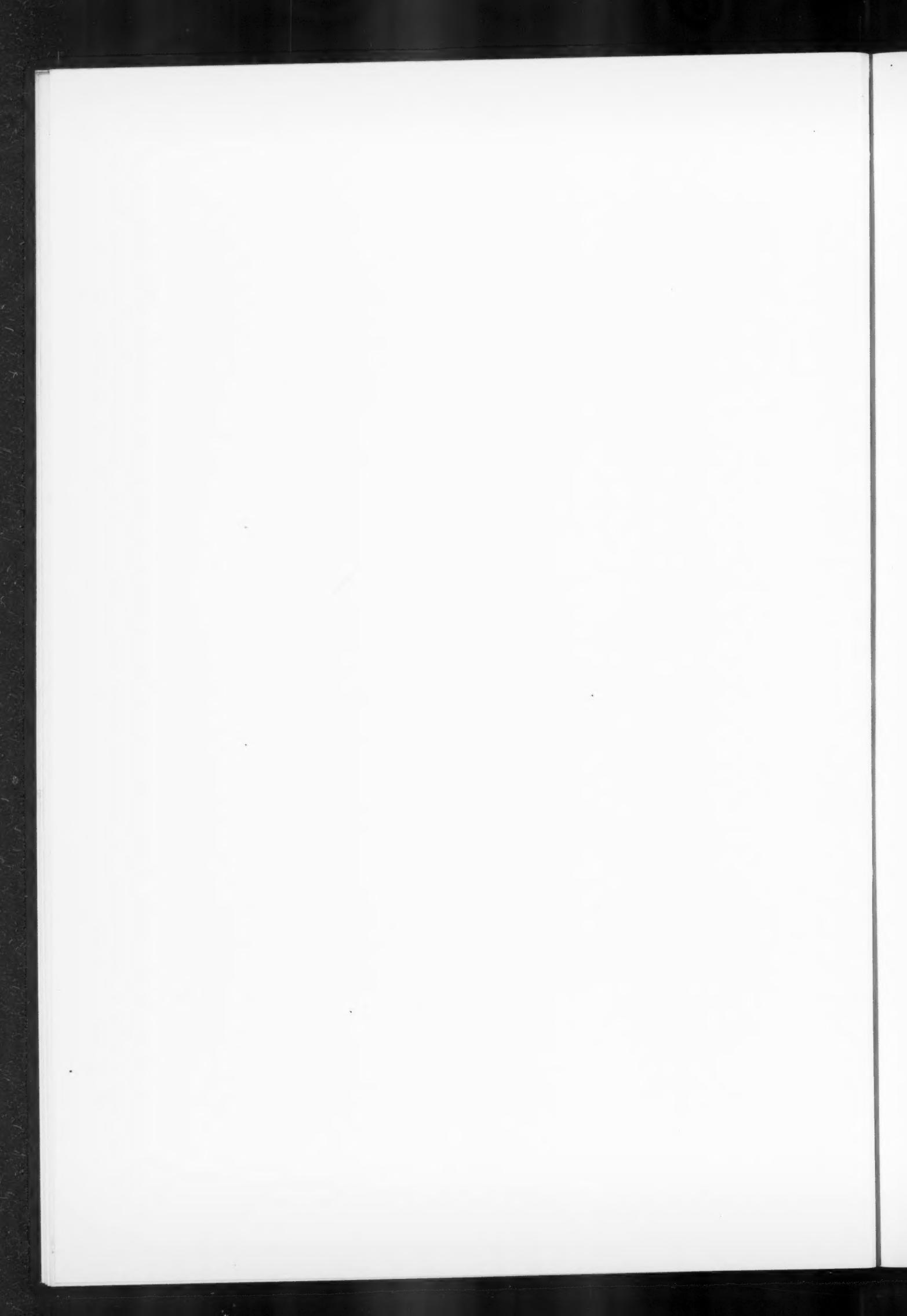


FIG. 5. CRESPI: DEATH OF ST. JOSEPH  
*Hermitage, Leningrad*



FIG. 6. CRESPI: THE HOLY FAMILY  
*Hermitage, Leningrad*





the Chiesa del Gesù, Ferrara.<sup>6</sup> All these works are closely related to the academic formulas which Crespi received in heritage from the preceding generation of Bolognese painters.<sup>7</sup> In the types one feels reminiscences of the ideals of the later Guido Reni; in most cases the composition is architectonic and monumental, the most superficially conceived psychology is expressed by exaggerated gesticulation and heads thrown back with upturned eyeballs. Though in the elegance and loveliness of the figures we can already divine a contemporary of Cignani and Franceschini and though some of the details betray the artistic temperament which will in time break through all academic bars, on the whole this group of paintings shows clearly that in the 'eighties Crespi still took a lively interest in the problem of an altar, composition in its classic, purely baroque form.

Probably in the 'eighties the master executed several paintings, fore-stalling in some measure the tendencies of his later works. These are: the Holy Family in the Pitti Gallery (Fig. 2); Saint Ursula in the Pinacoteca of Bologna and Achilles and Centaur Chiron in Vienna. In these pictures, particularly in the first one, one feels the strongest influence of the young Guercino: the forms, illumined by a silvery light stream, seem to swim out of the environing gloom, the "spotted" light and shade plays softly on the greenish flesh-tints, the general colour-scheme is sustained in dark muted tones. This luminism of Guercino, along with a number of impulses deriving from Canuti and Burrini, played an important part in Crespi's artistic development, emancipating him from academic traditions. The journey to Venice and the acquaintance with the works of Titian, Veronese, Feti and Lys promoted still more the growing picturesque tendencies of his art, which toward the beginning of the 'nineties becomes more or less formed.

A proof of this is found in the first place the wonderful frescoes of the Palazzo Pepoli in Bologna (about 1691), one of the most charming decorative systems of the seicento. The frescoes, on two of the ceilings, represent a Gathering of the Gods and Hercules with the four Seasons. The refined grace of these paintings which seem to have absorbed many Venetian elements (principally on the line Fety-Lys) marks for them a place apart in the Italian art of the seventeenth century, from which they stand out as anticipating the artistic programme of the Rococo.

<sup>6</sup> This last picture hangs on the left wall of the chapel on the right. It does not figure in Voss' index, although it is mentioned by Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 57).

<sup>7</sup> The fact, that according to Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 7), Crespi sometimes worked in the manner of Simone Cantarini also denotes, among other facts, the painter's close connection with academic traditions.

Light and elegant figures alternate with other heavier ones serving as "repoussoirs" and taken in a perspective of "sottinsu." This contrasting juxtaposition makes the figures soaring in the air still more fragile and ephemeral. The homely landscapes, the frolicking putti, the smiling faces, the generously scattered flowers and fruits give to all the frescoes a peculiarly joyous character, involuntarily calling to mind associative images from the eighteenth century. Compared with the works of the 'eighties the frescoes of the Palazzo Pepoli denote a greater maturity of technique, along with a darkening of the colour-scheme and a change of style towards lighter and more graceful forms, gradually supplanting the rather heavy, purely baroque ones of the foregoing decade.

This tendency is in general characteristic for the majority of Crespi's works during the 'nineties which with the first decade of the eighteenth century appears to be a period of transition in the master's art, developing from the years of youthful questing in the 'eighties towards the height of maturity in his famous series of the Seven Sacraments in the Dresden Gallery painted about 1712. A lack of unity in style is typical for this period. Although the painter is gradually cutting himself free from academic formulas, as denoted amongst other facts by the weakening of his interest for the problem of a monumental altarpiece composition, nevertheless he executed at this period a number of pictures still connected most closely with the classicistic tradition of the 'eighties. Genre and pastoral subjects come to the fore and his religious pictures also begin to be treated in a genre manner. The forms grow smaller and more differentiated, the colour-scheme deepens, engulfing little by little the local colours, light and shade grows denser, the stroke becomes freer, the handling thicker, the psychology deeper and more condensed, the composition denotes a partial denial of academic schemes, which are giving way to the picturesque freedom of the general composition. Some of these changes were doubtlessly connected with a further and deeper study of the early works of Guercino, whom Crespi imitates not only in his general tonality but also in his peculiar conception of the effect of light.<sup>8</sup> There are reasons to believe that at the same period Crespi became acquainted with the works of Mattia Preti, whose elaborate luminism could not but make the strongest impression on him. True, that Preti conceived the problem of light and shade quite otherwise than Crespi, who in this respect follows rather the tradition deriving from the early Guercino, nevertheless in his

<sup>8</sup> Marangoni (*op. cit.*, p. 576) and Voss (*op. cit.*, p. 7 and in the article "Guercino" in Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler, XV, p. 221) also note the influence of Guercino.



FIG. 7. CRESPI: THE HOLY FAMILY

*Art Museum, Naples*



FIG. 8. CRESPI: THE HOLY FAMILY

*Collection of Mr. Stepanoff, Paris*

214  
215  
216





FIG. 9. CRESPI: ST. MAGDALEN  
*Property of Julius Bohter, Munich*



FIG. 10. CRESPI: MADONNA WITH ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST  
*Art Gallery, Dresden*





works, particularly his sketches (for instance the two allegories of the Pest in the Naples Museum) one often meets with a picturesque treatment extremely near to the Bolognese master. Crespi probably studied at the same period the Dutch genre painters who were to widen the range of his subjects. However, immediate traces of their influence are not to be found in the works of the artist, who remains a typical Italian even in his most naturalistic paintings. I am inclined rather to think that the growth of Crespi's naturalistic tendencies is connected with Caravaggesque reminiscences which he drew principally from the works of Guercino.<sup>9</sup> The influence of Rembrandt, so often put forward, began to play a certain part only towards the very end of the period of transition, which embraces, as was already mentioned, the 'nineties and the first decade of the eighteenth century.

One of the most interesting works of this period is the remarkable painting in the collection of Count Contini in Rome, "Cupids playing with the sleeping nymphs" (Fig. 3), which had a companion picture, now lost, "Cupids disarmed by the nymphs," which was on sale about ten years ago at an art dealer's in Petersburg. The existence of this companion picture enables us to identify the painting in the Contini collection with the work of Crespi mentioned by Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 56: "due quadri per il milord Cucc, in uno de' quali espresse Amore disarmato dalle ninfe di Diana, e nell'altro le ninfe stesse, che fanno vari scherzi ad Amore").<sup>10</sup> The general colour-scheme is sustained in a dark greenish tone. The blue, yellow, lilac and brownish-red tints of the nymphs' garments contrast effectively with their silvery-white flesh-tints, standing out in light masses against the background of dark landscape. The figures of the nymphs and cupids are placed so as to form a number of different planes leading the eye to the landscape in the background. The extraordinary grace and loveliness of the whole conception connects this picture with the works of Albani who exercised in this case the strongest influence upon Crespi, as evidenced by his four *tondi* in the Borghese Gallery in Rome and particularly the "Disarmed Cupids" in the Louvre, showing an almost similar composition.<sup>11</sup> A direct connection with the elegant art of Albani is also evident in two other pictures by Crespi treating the same subject — Cupids disarmed by Nymphs in the Pinacoteca of Bologna and in the Museum

<sup>9</sup> See Longhi. The climax of Caravaggio's influence on Guercino. *Art in America*, 1926, pp. 133-148.

<sup>10</sup> Luigi Crespi (*op. cit.*, p. 214) also mentions this picture, though without precising the subject: "Due quadri per Milord Cuk."

<sup>11</sup> See: *La peinture au Musée du Louvre. Ecoles italiennes XVIe, XVIIe, XVIIIe siècles* par Gabriel Rouchès. Paris, Pl. 60.

der bildenden Künste in Leipzig.<sup>12</sup> The latter was executed somewhat later, as evidenced by the freer handling and the dark, brownish colouring. Here ought also to be mentioned the charming picture, which has recently come into the possession of the Fine Arts Museum in Moscow (Fig. 4). It represents a scene in a wine-cellar. Painted in a rather dry manner this picture is one of the earliest genre compositions of the master. The colouring is founded on strongly expressed local tints among which light blue, yellow, brown-red, green and golden-white predominate. Some of the details (as for instance the monk and the girl) amazingly laconic and forceful in treatment, involuntarily call to mind similar figures in the works of Le Nain and Chardin, to whose art Crespi often comes near in spirit.

Along with these small pictures, which seem to forestall the refined grace of the Rococo, Crespi executed a number of monumental compositions on religious subjects. Among them may be mentioned the Madonna with Angels, St. Louis Gonzaga and Stanislaus Kostka at Parma, the great canvas with the seven founders of the Servitan order in the Chiesa dei Servi, Bologna, which was highly valued by the painter himself; St. Frances, Stanislaus and Louis Gonzaga in San Bartolomeo, Modena; and the Death of St. Joseph<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 5) and the Holy Family in the Hermitage (Fig. 6) painted for Cardinal Ottoboni (Zanotti, *op. cit.*, p. 55). For the last picture, repeated by Crespi on a smaller scale in the painting of the Naples Museum (Fig. 7), we have a preparatory study in the collection of Mr. Stepanoff, Paris (Fig. 8). It repeats all the principal lines of the Petersburg composition, with only unimportant modifications in the gestures and movements of the several figures. To the same group of works one must ascribe the broadly painted St. Magdalen in the collection of Julius Böhler (Fig. 9), Munich, the small Madonna with St. John the Baptist in the Dresden Gallery (Fig. 10), the Adoration of the Shepherds in the same Gallery, the Flight to Egypt in the collection Gurlitt, Berlin, and the Adoration of the Shepherds in the collection of Prof. Glaser, Berlin (Fig. 11). The last three paintings are conceived in a spirit of pure genre, that sets them apart from most of the foregoing pictures executed in the severe style of Bolognese academism. Also treated in the same manner is another picture on a religious subject—Moses and the seven daughters of the priest of Midian (in the collection of Dr. Longhi, Rome, Fig. 12). This paint-

<sup>12</sup> See Voss in *Archiv für Kunstgeschichte*, 1. Lieferung, Leipzig, 1913, pl. 14.

<sup>13</sup> A modified replica of this picture is preserved in the Galleria Corsini in Rome. It is mentioned by Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 55): ". . . e quindi un' altro Transito pure di San Giuseppe, ma in un piccole rame, e da tener presso il letto."



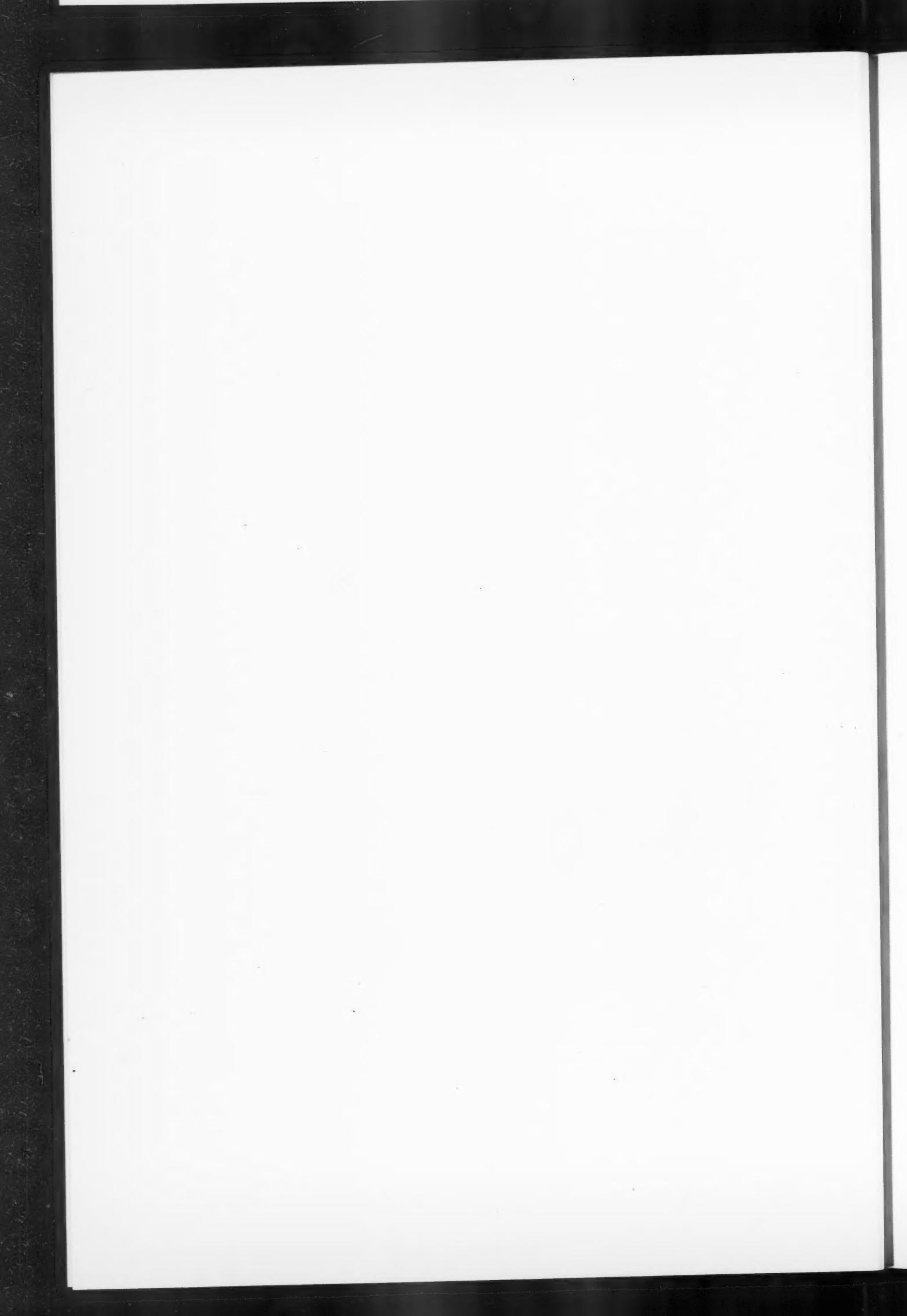
FIG. 11. CRESPI: ADORATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

Collection of Prof. Curt Gläser, Berlin

FIG. 14. CRESPI: PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST'S FAMILY

Uffizi, Florence

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ing, overladen with a generous and somewhat tiresome quantity of genre requisites, is mentioned by Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 52): "Per gli Aldrovandi uno pure ne pinse con molte figure, rappresentante Mosè, che difende le sette figliuole del sacerdote di Madian da'pastori che le avean cacciate dall'abbeverase ne'rivoli le greggie del loro padre . . . Vi sono poi capre, buoi, giumenti, canie che so io . . .").<sup>14</sup> The last picture as well as the Adoration of the Shepherds and the aforementioned scene in a wine cellar shows Crespi's gradual departure from the puristic formulas of baroque religious art which are dissolved in more fragile forms and in a number of genre details — the result of the growing naturalistic tendencies. These three pictures bring us already close to the capital works of the whole period of transition — the Massacre of the Innocents and the Fair at Poggio a Caiano in the Uffizi.

Crespi's Massacre of the Innocents (Fig. 13) is without doubt one of the painter's best works. Looking at this charming painting one is involuntarily reminded of the refined elegance of Bernardo Cavallini, with whom Crespi has many points of contact. A tumultuous movement passes through the whole composition, binding the figures into one indissoluble mass. The two women standing apart seem only to enhance the impression of raging struggle, the distant echoes of which are seen on the platform of the building rising in the background and in the lower right corner. Placing the single episodes of the Massacre on three different levels Crespi achieved a greater picturesque animation of the whole scene, the agitated and turbulent character of which is further reinforced by the dark and gloomy colouring. Touches of brownish-red and grey-green hardly stand out among the predominant blues and browns, which form a dark framing for the figures, illuminated by a silvery light playing on their surface in soft white lights. In such coloristic effects as in a number of compositional details the influence of Guercino (from whom Crespi borrowed the purely Caravagesque motive of the half-clad warriors with their strong energetic gestures) is to be felt.<sup>15</sup> But Guercino's heavy, purely baroque forms become with Crespi elegant and fragile, subject to quite a new linear rhythm. The general style of the Massacre of the Innocents points to the middle of the first decade of the eighteenth century as the time of its execution.<sup>16</sup>

#### The other capital work of the period of transition, the Fair at Poggio

<sup>14</sup> According to Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 62) Crespi repeated this subject four times.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the Burial of St. Petronilla by Guercino in the Capitolian Gallery in Rome and the Decollation of St. John the Baptist by Caravaggio in S. Giovanni, La Valletta, Malta.

<sup>16</sup> Marangoni, *op. cit.*, p. 591.

a Caiano, was painted about 1708.<sup>17</sup> With this work Crespi resolutely enters the domain of independent genre, which becomes the dominating problem of his art during the second and third decades. This picture executed in dark greenish-brown tones is extremely interesting for its purely Italian character, particularly evident if the picture be compared with Flemish and Dutch paintings dealing with similar subjects. Somewhat later Crespi repeats the same subject in the picture of the Brera, Milan. The artist's earliest portraits must also be ascribed to the period of transition: The General Palfy in Dresden, the unknown boy in the Campori collection, Modena, the self-portrait in the Hermitage and the portrait of the painter's family in the Uffizi (Fig. 14). This last picture painted about 1709 was presented by the artist after his return from Florence to the Duke of Tuscany. According to Zanotti (*op. cit.*, p. 51) Crespi has here depicted himself "a cavallo di un bastone, tirando un piccolo carro, in cui stava Luigi suo figliuolo, allora bambino." This little picture, the colour scheme of which is based on a piquant combination of mauve, brown, dark-green and white, is painted with the unusual brio present in all the artist's works of the second and third decades — the most brilliant period of Crespi's career, who executed about this time his happiest and most finished paintings.

A dark, almost monochrome tonality composed of brown, grey and green tints is particularly typical for the period we now revert to. All is subordinate to a brownish tone which contrasts with the silvery light. The handling bears a free picturesque character, the colour is laid on thickly, the brush models the form softly, the "spotted" light and shade seems to wrap all the figures and objects in a downy mist, sometimes deepening into shade, sometimes flashing into quivering silvery lights. The genre element attains definite predominance forcing into the background the reminiscences of academism, which are hardly noticeable at this period. The forms grew still finer and more differentiated, often attaining truly French fragility and elegance, particularly noticeable in the small pictures. The concentrated and simplified psychologism reaches at some moments depths quite unusual for an Italian. This explains the influence Rembrandt's paintings must have had on the artist, inasmuch as he found in them the maximum of individual psychologism — a direct antipode to the normal academism which employed an extremely limited array of pictorial means for the expression of emotions. Besides Rembrandt Crespi studied at this period the works of Rubens,<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Marangoni, *op. cit.*, p. 591.

<sup>18</sup> Zanotti, *op. cit.*, p. 70.



FIG. 12. CRESPI: MOSES AND THE SEVEN DAUGHTERS OF THE PRIEST OF MIDIAN  
*Collection of Roberto Longhi, Rome*



FIG. 13. CRESPI: MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS  
*Uffizi, Florence*





the acquaintance with which could not but have favoured the further growth of picturesque tendencies in his art, which reached full maturity towards the second decade.

## FANTIN-LATOUR

1856-1904

By JAN-TOPAS

*Paris*

**A**T the high water mark of Impressionism—naturalistic in painting, positivistic in letters, and in philosophy which followed afterwards with its pictorial and poetic symbolism, as reaction against this triple realism, at that moment appeared the art of Henry Fantin-Latour, an art of moderation, of measure, of delicate gradations and half tones. The others quarreled, accused and anathemized, each envying the other. He only knew how to whisper and to pipe, but to whisper and pipe as a master.

It was necessary that his works should be of a high standard, and of an authentic appeal, in order that the fireworks of Impressionism (of which he thought little) and the brutalities of the naturalist school (of which he thought nothing) and all the noise which accompanied them should not drown out his delicate voice. Truly there was incongruity and difficulty in the case of Fantin-Latour.

And nevertheless, when one considers it, he shows himself perhaps the most realistic of his contemporaries. Let us always be clear—realist in his way and not in the manner of those who, being in the last analysis but inverted romantics, got out—especially in the novel—by preconceived eccentricities and by alliances with ugliness, of the task of representing nature according to the truth. Fantin-Latour pursued not reality which is nothing but a snare, but—a certainty.

"At a certain distance in the real," said Bardey-d'Aurevilly, "one meets always the ideal, but those in the arts whom one calls the realists never dig that far."

Fantin-Latour was an artist for whom, according to the witticism, "the visible world exists," and nothing beyond and nothing less. He was this by his nature, tranquilly observant, delicately attentive. He was so also because of the gifts which did not permit him to model "whatever doesn't pose well" after his own notion. "To think of the sun," he wrote in one of his letters, in response to an invitation to paint a picture in the open air, "to think of the sun, of the clouds, of the changing weather, all that is too ephemeral, does not allow copying, and that is what is more suited to my craft."

In the composition of a realism such as that of Fantin-Latour's enters, to an extent, besides the study of what lives around him, a return to the sources of art where the natural vanquishes the artificial: to those masters of past times, Dutch, Flemish, Spanish, who had a love of materiality, an idea of an effective existence, and the courage to give it as it was (as much as they were able) with diligence and freedom.

But neither for them, nor for Fantin-Latour was nature necessarily something vile and ugly—in the same way that probity in painting did not consist of rendering the aspects photographically, imitating them feature for feature, an undertaking more than hazardous, always imperfect if not impossible.

Also, Fantin-Latour transposed in a purified version what his eyes saw, what his memory recalled, and made of them interpretations of an artist, not replicas photographically exact.

Its psychic structure, in its most valuable portion, is that of a French bourgeois. This word had still, in the time of Fantin-Latour, a precise meaning. The bourgeoisie was less a social class than an intellectual category. It represented a way of living, of thinking and feeling—a man of courteous ways and solid ideas, well read and of fine tastes.

Such is, in fact, at bottom, Fantin-Latour, and such he appears in the greater part of his work—thoughtful, scrupulous, distinguished in his tastes, positive, slow and even a bit heavy.

But there is another face to this artist's psychology, a face less marked and much less remarking. Urged by currents fashionable at the time, and incited, doubtless, by certain factors, which really were essentially of his spirit,<sup>1</sup> Fantin-Latour followed the artists who nourished themselves on dreams and created them in their works.

At that period Wagnerism was fighting its share besides the other tendencies. Music was then the great art. In poetry Symbolism was

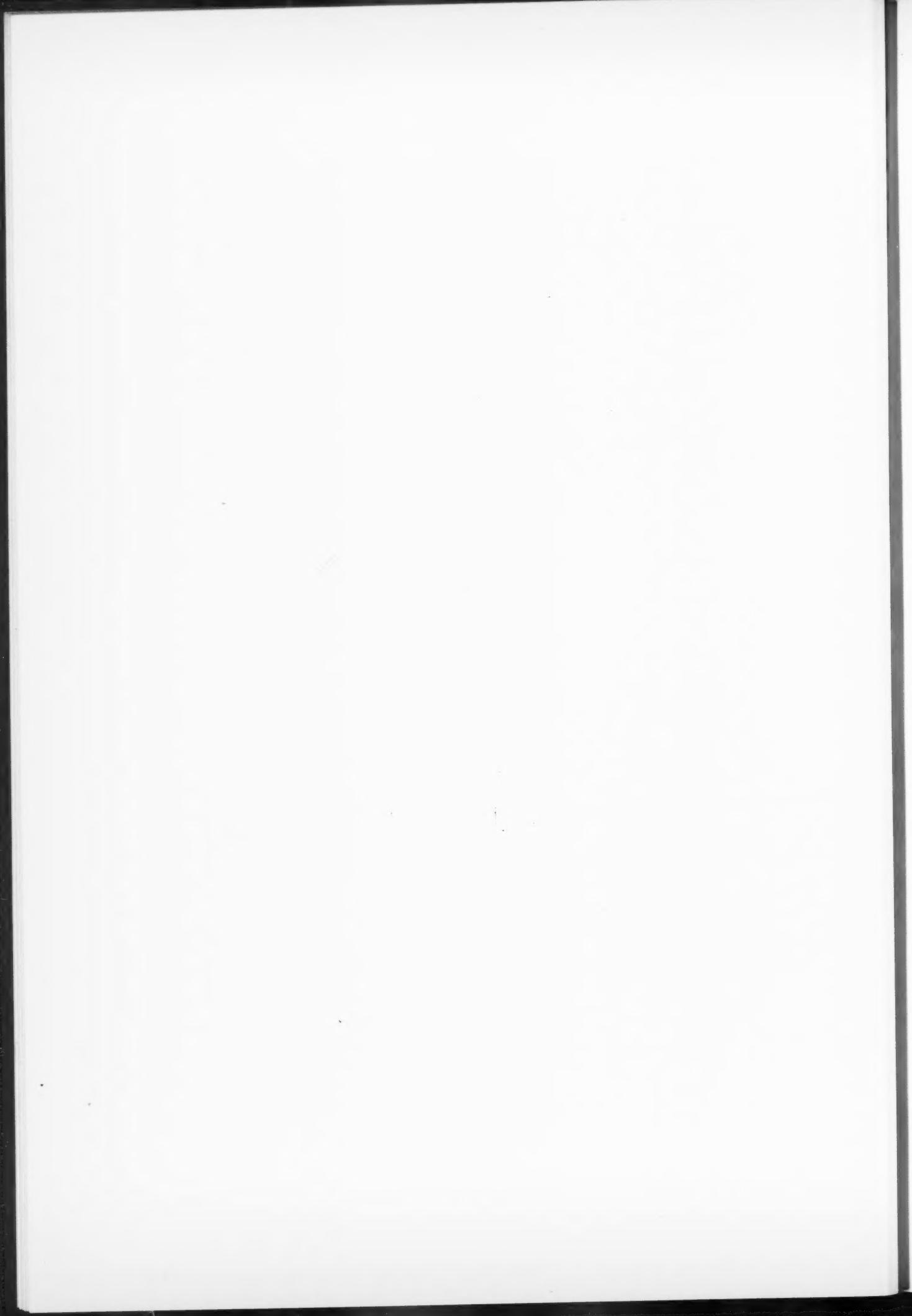
<sup>1</sup> Fantin-Latour was born of a French father (a painter without renown, but not merit) and a Russian mother.



FANTIN-LATOUR: PORTRAIT OF Miss FITZ-JAMES  
*Collection of Mr. Lewis B. Williams, Cleveland, Ohio*

FANTIN-LATOUR: PORTRAIT DE LUI-MÊME  
*Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Chester Dale, New York City*





born in opposition to the clarity, the rectangularity, and the cold perfection of the Parnassians.

That is when Fantin-Latour made his "transpositions from the music" as he called several of his paintings and lithographs. He painted and drew women — flowers of "Parsifal," of the "Valkeries" of the "Rhinegold" — and did a mass of works for which Wagner, Berlioz, Weber, Schumann and even Brahms and Rossini furnished the settings and imaginary beings.

Nevertheless his paternal heritage, his French blood conquered. And Fantin-Latour remains the painter of pictures which could carry the Balzacian title, "Scenes from Provincial Life," and be placed by their appeal and character along side of the famous romantic series of Balzac.

There Fantin-Latour presents in interiors, severely furnished with mahogany and ebony of the style of Louis Philippe, dignified stiff and awkward . . . in an atmosphere of calm and sleepy monotony, perfumed by the odor of myrtle and lavender — young women of small busts, who play on grand pianos, embroider, read, and spend their time without emotion, without trouble perhaps in an atmosphere delicately homely.

There are many canvases called "Embroiderers," "Readers," "The Two Sisters," "The Lesson," describing these quiet, languid joys, these subdued beauties, these intimacies jealously guarded.

The subject here is in complete harmony with the manufacture — arrangement, general arabesque, color. The forms are delicately marked, finely drawn and colored — "muted" — mat browns, blacks and subtle grays dominating. Theophile Gautier called these pictures, because of their chromatic scale, "symphonies in gray minor."

The same discretion in color, the same subtle drawing, the same broken light, characterizes the portraits of Fantin-Latour. His portraits include single figures, half and full length, and compositions — "A Studio at Batignolles," "A Corner of the Table," "Honor to Delacroix," "Around the Piano," where one finds all who were important among the artists and writers of Paris. I shall only name some — Alphonse Legros, Edouard Manet, Whistler, Bracquemond, Auguste Renoir, Claude Monet; the poets, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud; musicians, Vincent d'Indy and Chabrier.

The master grouped his models in friendly chats, placed them without apparent arrangement, and gave these groups a feeling of familiarity and cordial intimacy, although none among them were, as is known, personalities who had anything of the serene, conciliating or amiable.

His flower pieces (dahlias, peonies, gladiolas, roses, jacinths, chrysanthemums, carnations, violets, nameless blooms of Normandie) which are among the best I know, have the same imprint of serenity, of effacement, of bashful grace, altho here again, some of them are romantically arranged and heightened in color.

It is because the art of Fantin-Latour is essentially intimate and does not express itself except restrainedly. Violence, verve, energy are antipathetic to it. All that is dynamic in form, gesture, in light seems to be its contrary.

It is rare that an artist is as equal the full length of his work and as precociously ripe as Fantin-Latour. Even in his first canvases—"Portrait of my Sister Reading," "My Portrait in Shirt Sleeves," "Two Sisters, one Making Tapestry, the Other Reading," 1859, he shows himself a master, and without weakening he remained so to his old age.

At all times his technique is at once minute and easy. Here is how Fantin-Latour went about obtaining the effects of transparency and vibration which are typical of his pictures—

With a round brush charged with color, he covered the previously designed surface and then scraped it with horizontal strokes so that the grains thus deposited dried and became consistent. After having thus prepared the under part, he covered it with light, translucent glazes. Wherever the modeling necessitated he left the paint thick and rough in order that the light catching would form high tones.

"Mutatis Mutandis," he used the same method in his lithographs. He transferred his drawing from a heavily grained paper to the stone—which corresponded as a method to the coat and the scraping. But he used in addition the scraper to lighten still further his shadows, softening the passages from one tone to another, and to enliven the planes and masses.

The subject so treated is astonishingly polychrome—the colors wed the whites with rare delicacy, and the silver grays, the deep and velvety blacks.

And the paintings as well as the lithographs of Fantin-Latour are distinguished especially by a perfect justness in volumes and values, by a most agreeable harmony in color, and by a charm in which there is something pure, soft, austere and supremely fine.

## EUGENE SPEICHER

BY WALTER GUTMAN

*New York City*

ONE sees a picture by Cezanne. One says, "A Cezanne" in much the same way that one would say "an apple." It stands for a type. With certain variations in particulars, one gets from every picture, whatever the subject, the same sensations — the stimulation of subtle and exact harmonies of color, the repose of a bold and intelligent composition, the delicate yet certain conviction of substance thru the exact placement of the pigments in the contours. Less purely plastic but equally typical is Renoir — luscious, abounding, serene, are adjectives one can apply indiscriminately to still-lives, landscapes or figures. With the works of Eugene Speicher one must be more particular. He is little of a philosopher. His interest is always in his immediate subject, in its particular qualities. The Russian Woman, the Girl in the Green Hat, Polly, Yankee Town Pond, The Brick Yard, the different vases of flowers, exist not as masses of color, pieces of design, or assertions of form, but as psychic entities. It is of course this quality of individualization which enabled him to support himself during his earlier days by portraiture, and which would make him now our most widely known portraitist if he would accept the commissions offered. But it is not this ability to give an easy physical and psychical facsimile of the sitter that I mean. If the painting happens to be of a human figure it is a good portrait incidentally, but besides this the painter in feeling the peculiarities of the subject has transmuted them into an entity which captivates us apart from its relation with the original. Thus while his art is human more than plastic, it is a humanity of his creation, the reactions of a sensitive and trained nature to certain stimuli which instead of generalizing its conclusions, particularizes them. Being a painter his means are color, form and design, so before discussing his essential gift more exactly, it may be best to examine them.

His color, generally, is not interesting as a thing in itself. This is not the necessary result of his gift. Titian may also be said to have been a "human" painter, yet his colors, by the exactness of each tone and by the perfection of their relations are beautiful for themselves. Speicher's tones are often sloppy, and their relations while harmonious have seldom that preciseness whose effect may be likened to clear notes struck on a piano. The reason may be his theory of color. It is said that he de-

fines good color as existing when the different tones in a painting combine to form a single new one. A good example of this would be his most recent work, called, *The Russian Woman*. It shows a woman of middle stature seated dramatically—her head pointed forward, her legs crossed, one hand gripping an arm of the chair to brace her position, her other arm relaxed. She is dressed in silver-gray silk, tinged golden by the light shining upon it. The dress has a ruffle of lemon-yellow geranium leaves outlining the V of the neck. At the bottom of the skirt is a wide border with a design in orange, grape and lemon. Her stockings are also lemon, browned by reflections from the floor. The little upholstery of the chair which shows is orange. Over one of its arms lies a cloak of lilac. The wall is a deep, rather muddy purple, except the floor panel, which is a dull orange. The woman is of a swarthy complexion—shining black hair, Baby-blue eyes, olive skin. For ornaments she wears earrings of amber and a bracelet of green-gold. The scheme is of considerable subtlety, achieved economically. Its sophisticated and dramatic connotations are good interpretations of the character, and the lemon-gold ensemble makes an effective spot, but the colors themselves are indecisive. The gray of the dress has notions towards red and longings for blue. The purple of the wall is not a full echo of the lilac wrap. The orange on the chair and on the dress does not form a chord with the lemon of the dress and jewelry.

Another example of clever manipulation but incomplete achievement in particulars is the *Polly* of the Metropolitan Museum. The scheme is pomegranate in the skirt and sweater-jacket, light salmon in the waist, red brown in the eyes and hair. Then unstained poplar in the highboy and table, purple in the belt and on the wall, and lilac gray in the wicker chair and flower vase, the flowers themselves being salmon. The pomegranate and salmon miss both perfection of tone and of harmony. The lilac grays are better in themselves, but do not find satisfying echo in the wall. The highboy and table are good. When one thinks of the exciting red browns of Derain, the green browns of Segonzac and Waroquier, the lilacs of Marie Laurencin, one realizes how much a degree of greater exactness in tone and harmony would bring this painting nearer mastership. But we do not have to go abroad for an example. Speicher himself has given us one, as we shall see later.

Speicher's form, in its field, is superior to his color. But to a certain extent, as his color, it gives little pleasure for itself. Before a nude of Cezanne we are convinced in a fully sensual manner of its substance. But the substance of the nude is not differentiated from that of an



HEAD OF A YOUNG GIRL.

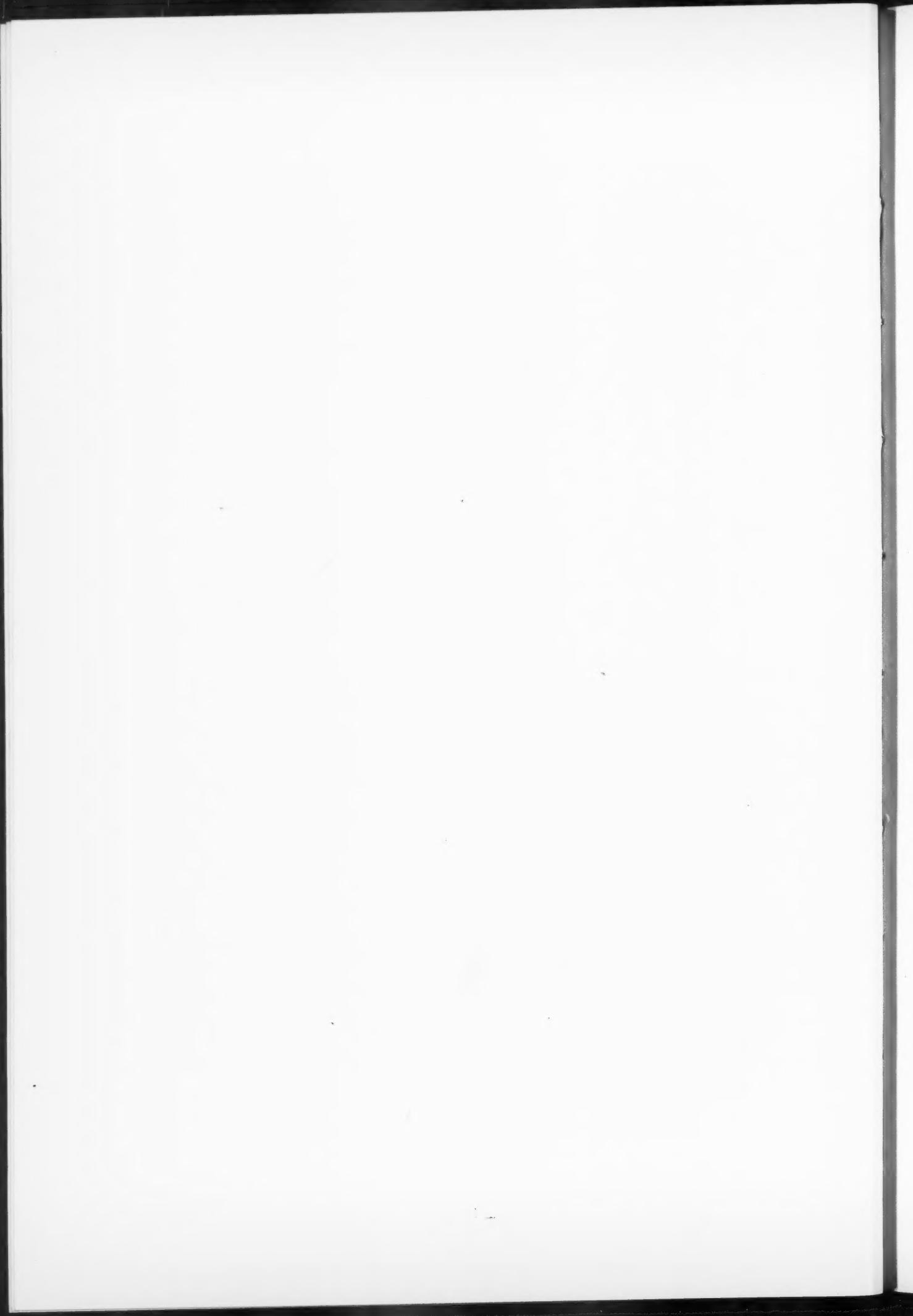
BY EUGENE SPEICHER

*Collection of Mrs. Lesley Green Schaefer, New York*



THE QUARRMAN  
By EUGENE SPEICHER

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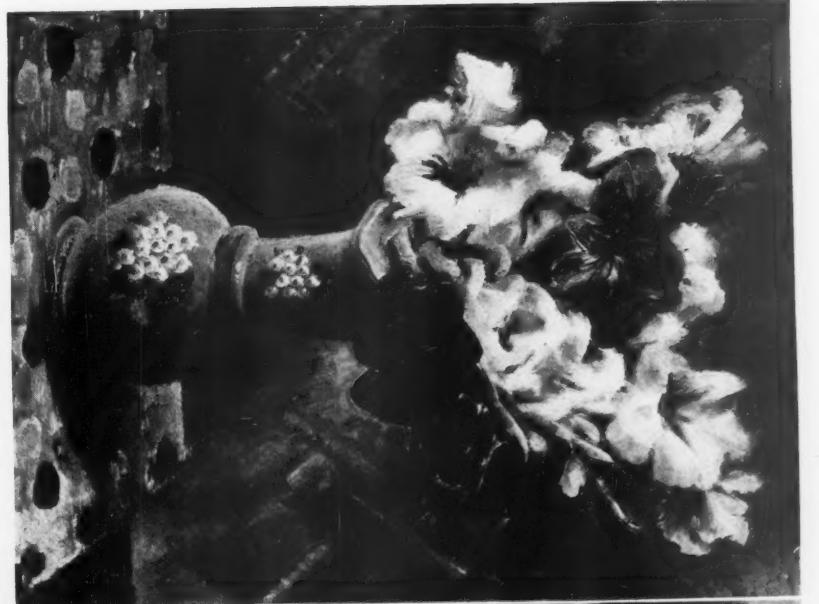


apple. From both feelings of substance we derive identical pleasure. In fact it is unnecessary to recognize the original nature of the object. One can enjoy his still lives equally well thinking the globes are colored billiard balls, as afterwards when one realizes they are fruit. With Speicher one enjoys the sensation of form, but the enjoyment is closely related to the inspiration. In the Russian Woman, the firmness of her muscular torso is differentiated from the softness of her arms and breasts. Likewise the rigid quality of her chest is differentiated from the suppleness of the trunk. In his tulips one feels the wax-delicacy of the petals, the writhing fibrousness of the leaves. In the landscapes, the malleability of the soil, the rigidity of the stone houses. Our enjoyment is not abstract but associative — that which is sensual in a well developed woman, or fragile in a young girl, that is sharp and refreshing in a flower and undefined and restful in a landscape, are brought to us though the more generalized, perhaps more refined and intellectual pleasures, are left out.

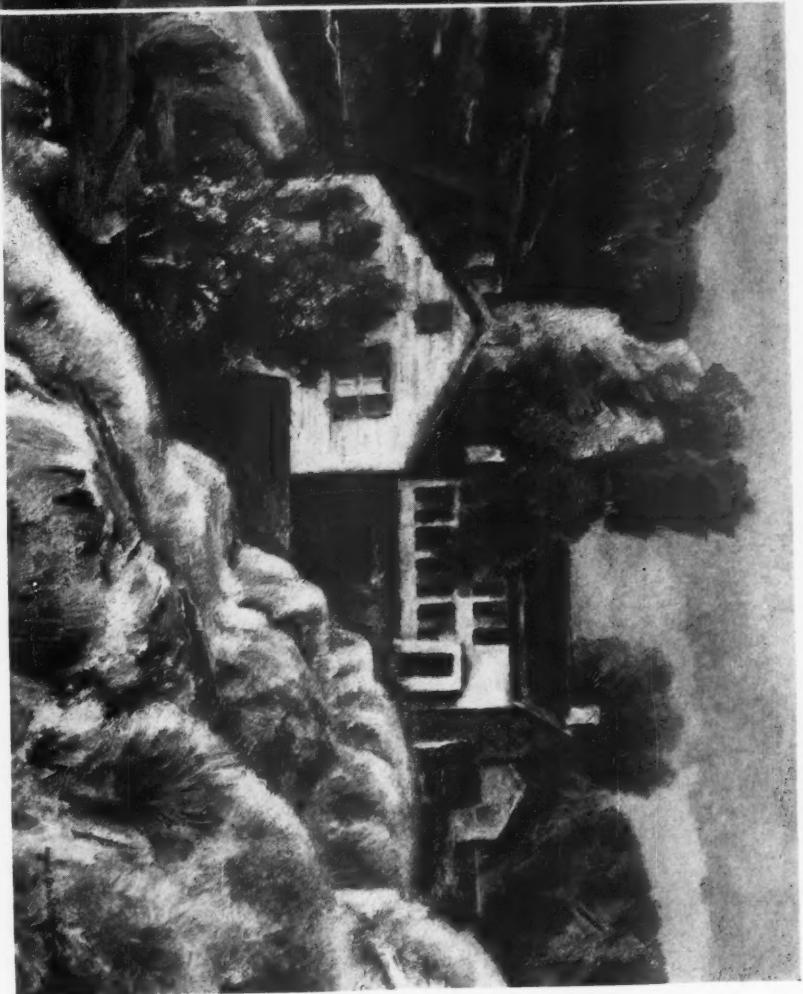
The object of design is to give the artist's feelings to the spectator. Speicher's design with color we have already examined — a few tones cleverly varied in pitch, and iterated, with the object of forming a pleasing whole and interpreting his subject. He does not use color for construction any more than for its own beauty, neither to build with as Cezanne or to reinforce linear and planular rhythm as Picasso. He is essentially a draughtsman to whom color is an extra glamour. His formal design is three dimensional, every figure clearly enveloped in space, his composition symbolized by the pyramid rather than the triangle. Weight has an important part in his effect. It has been said aptly that the feeling of gravitational repose is a characteristic of his work. This is partly attained in his figure paintings by the size of his models. Then the fact that they are always seated makes their stature expressive of the sensations of quiet and grandeur, rather than excitement and force. Sometimes, as in his Des Moines nude and his Girl With the Green Hat, these qualities are assisted by the conventional contrasting of horizontals with perpendiculars — the bed with the figure of the nude, and the long table with that of the girl. Sometimes the shapes of the objects are made subtly to give these impressions. For example, in the Polly of the Metropolitan Museum, the upright posture of the girl, and the highboy and plain wall in back would tend to give the feeling of uprush. This is but weakly checked by the small section of the table shown, a stop diluted by the sprightly vase resting on its top. However, the relaxed position of Polly, one arm resting on the table, the broad-

ened base given to her by the chair, and the repetition of this pyramid by the highboy with its substantial base, enforce an impressive though subtle solidity of pose. In his landscapes the vibration of the trees is foiled by a flat body of water or ground and the surge of the hills by the low roofs and long forms of the houses. His flower pieces by the width of the vase and the spread of the flowers over it are dignified as well as delicate. In only a few paintings — the Bouquet of Tulips of the Widener collection, or The Yankee Town Pond of the Hirshland — is there a suggestion of linear pattern. These, in the sway and nodding of the tulips and the febrile vigour of the trees are refreshing, so that one may wish them more usual. However, it is not to be expected as the force, simplicity and completeness of sensuality which are his messages, are better expressed by his habitual means.

We have said that Speicher is a human artist, and it is now time to see in what way. The gifts of Botticelli are sensitivity and grace, of Rubens health and humour, of Speicher it might be said strength and gravity. The gallery of his work gives a stupendous impression of vigour. An old farmer whose make-up is very much like the hickory staff he holds. A young huntsman, a Lindberg type of physical and nervous adjustment, an innumerable gallery of super-women, round, hardened cheeks, strong necks, ample chests, powerful torsos, opulent legs. Scarcely ever does the skin under their eyes show loss of sleep; seldom are their jaws relaxed in indecision. One feels perhaps a bit of the allegorical Bronzino in them — of breasts inherently armour-plated, of arms unnecessarily willing to raise a sword and heads inordinately chic in a helmet. One feels a sensuality understood in too purely physical terms, of human values translated into obvious symbols. But these are incipient qualities rather than exploited, ones to which the artist seldom quite succumbs and which he tends to conquer more completely as he progresses. This can be seen in a comparison of the large portrait of Mlle. Jeanne Balzac and the painting of the Russian woman, who with a temperament equally theatrical and a body as beautiful, has been seen with a more distinguishing eye and depicted with a more refined, less blind and romantic sensuality. Still more in the Polly where sensitivity and alertness give the feelings of restraint and modesty, qualities as womanly as her form. But perhaps the most perfect realization of physical, psychic and painter qualities which Speicher has yet achieved is the Girl in the Green Hat of the Lewisohn collection. The painting is fairly familiar. A girl seated at a table with her arms folded and resting on it. She wears a hat of St. Patrick's green; a dress of the

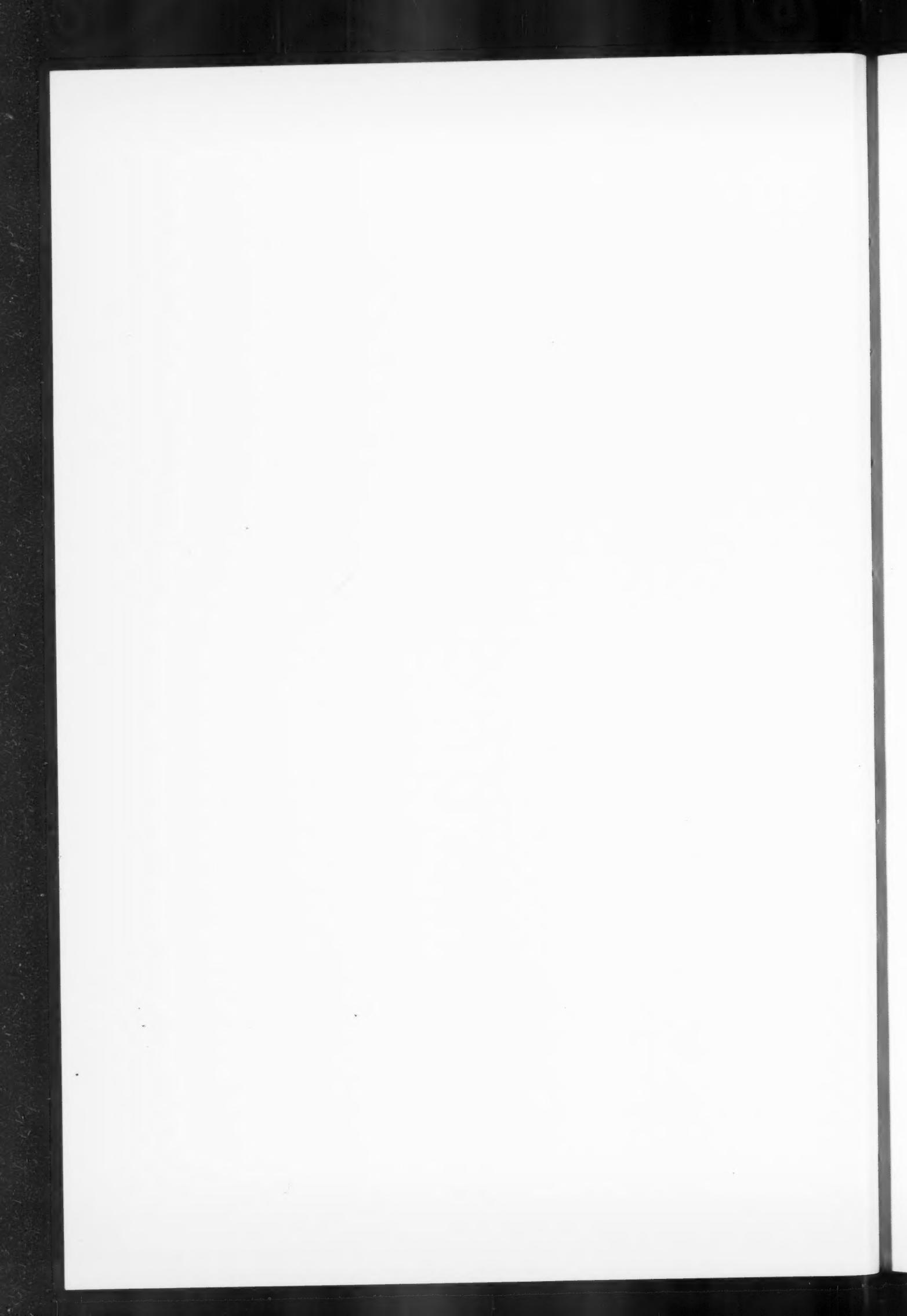


BOUQUET OF FLOWERS  
BY EUGENE SPEICHER



AMERICAN LANDSCAPE  
BY EUGENE SPEICHER

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same color, over which is worn a transparent white wool sweater with a purple border. The table is covered with a cloth of cut velvet designed with red roses and their leaves. On the table is a vase of green blue filled with roses of white and pink. The wall is lavender, against which is a chair, like that in which the girl is seated, of walnut. The girl herself is of ruddy complexion, her long auburn hair falling in a stream over one shoulder and along her breast. The colors are in themselves beautiful — the bright green, the full purple red, the lighter green under the sweater, the shimmer of red and green in the cloth where the woof is bare, the grape color of the wall and the deep amber of the chairs. The composition is good, the reposed figure of the girl retained by the long, broad mass of the table. And the drawing, the certainty of atmosphere, the solidity of her grand and calm body, the sharp plane of the table is perfect. In spirit it has the majesty characteristic of Speicher, but also modesty, humour in the meaning of balance, and consequently gentleness, not always present. When one compares it with the fine works of the great Frenchmen in the same gallery, one must agree that if they are masterpieces, it is also.

## GEORGES DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR

### A FORGOTTEN FRENCH MASTER OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

By HERMANN VOSS

*Berlin*

THE work of this artist, born about 1600 in Lunéville, where he died in 1652, had been practically forgotten, when, in 1915 in "Archiv fur Kunstgeschichte," I attempted to reconstruct his personality on the basis of two signed paintings and the available literary material.

Up to the present time only a few authentic pictures by him are known to us, and it is unlikely that their number will be appreciably augmented, as there is every indication that he was an unprolific painter who worked under difficulties.

Du Mesnil spent his life in a remote country town in Lorraine, and his art reflects unmistakably the narrow horizons of his local milieu. His strongly marked personality, however, and his individual and independent approach lend a power and directness to his work which arrests and holds one's attention.

It is of course unlikely that Du Mesnil should never have left his native town, for the stylistic antecedents of his highly personal style are to be found in the chiaroscuro painting of Caravaggio — which was popularized outside of Italy mainly by Honthorst. Even the early chronicles about Du Mesnil all mention candle-lit night scenes as characteristic of his paintings — ("Dans une Nuit," "Dans un Clairobscur"). It is obvious, therefore, that Du Mesnil was regarded by his contemporaries as an expert exponent of this style, so popular between 1610 and 1630, in which he could hardly have become so proficient in Lunéville or Nancy.

Where he pursued his studies, however, must for the present remain uncertain. The close dynastic connection existing in the early seventeenth century between the houses of Lorraine and Tuscany suggest that like his fellow-countryman, Callot, Du Mesnil may have spent part of his youth in the south, and frequented for a time the studios of Rome and Florence.

While his paintings remind us strongly of the followers of Caravaggio, not only in style but in content, all those known to us are too defi-



FIG. 1. DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR: NATIVITY  
*Louvre, Paris*



FIG. 2. DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR: MOTHER AND CHILD  
*Museum, Rennes*



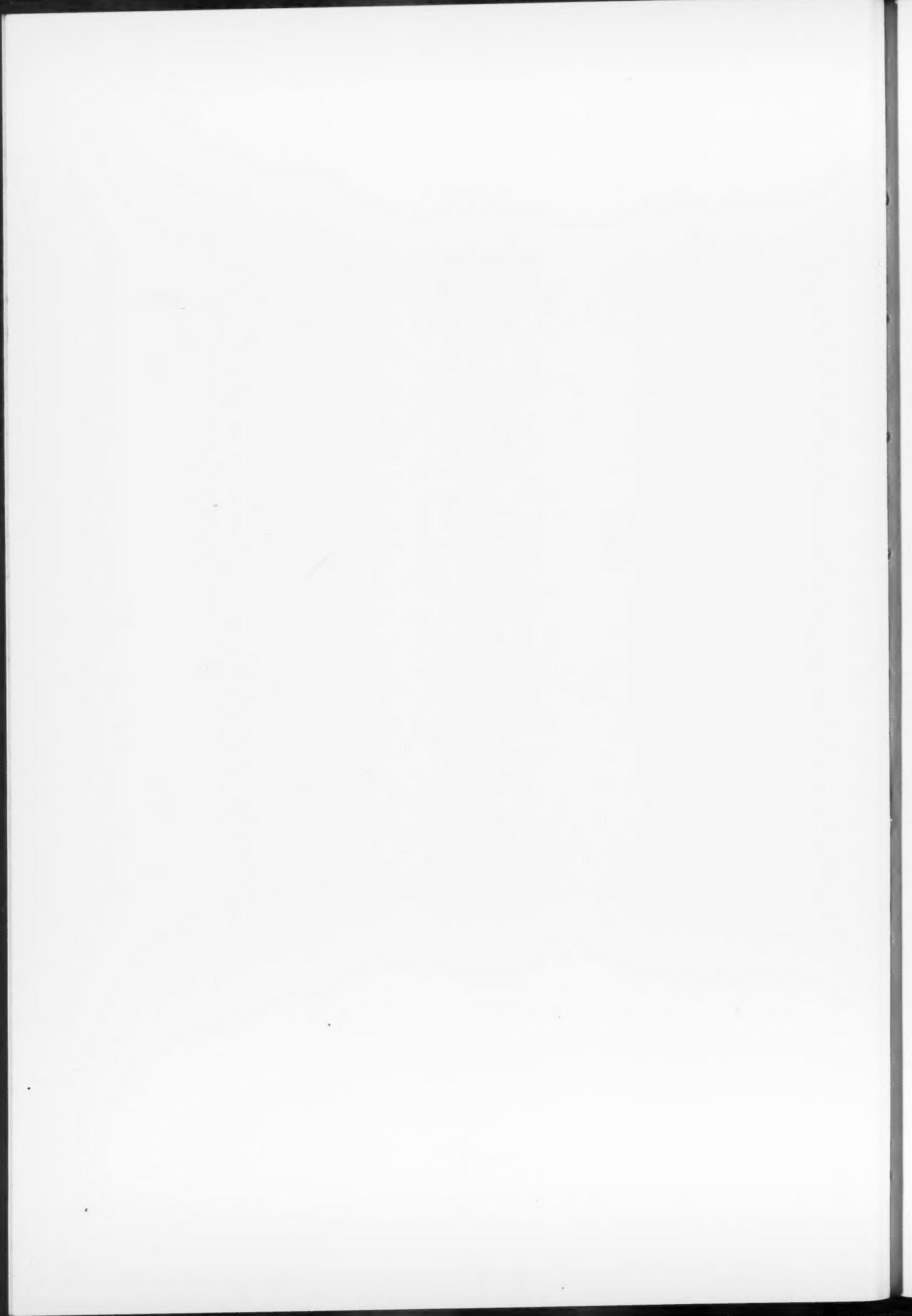
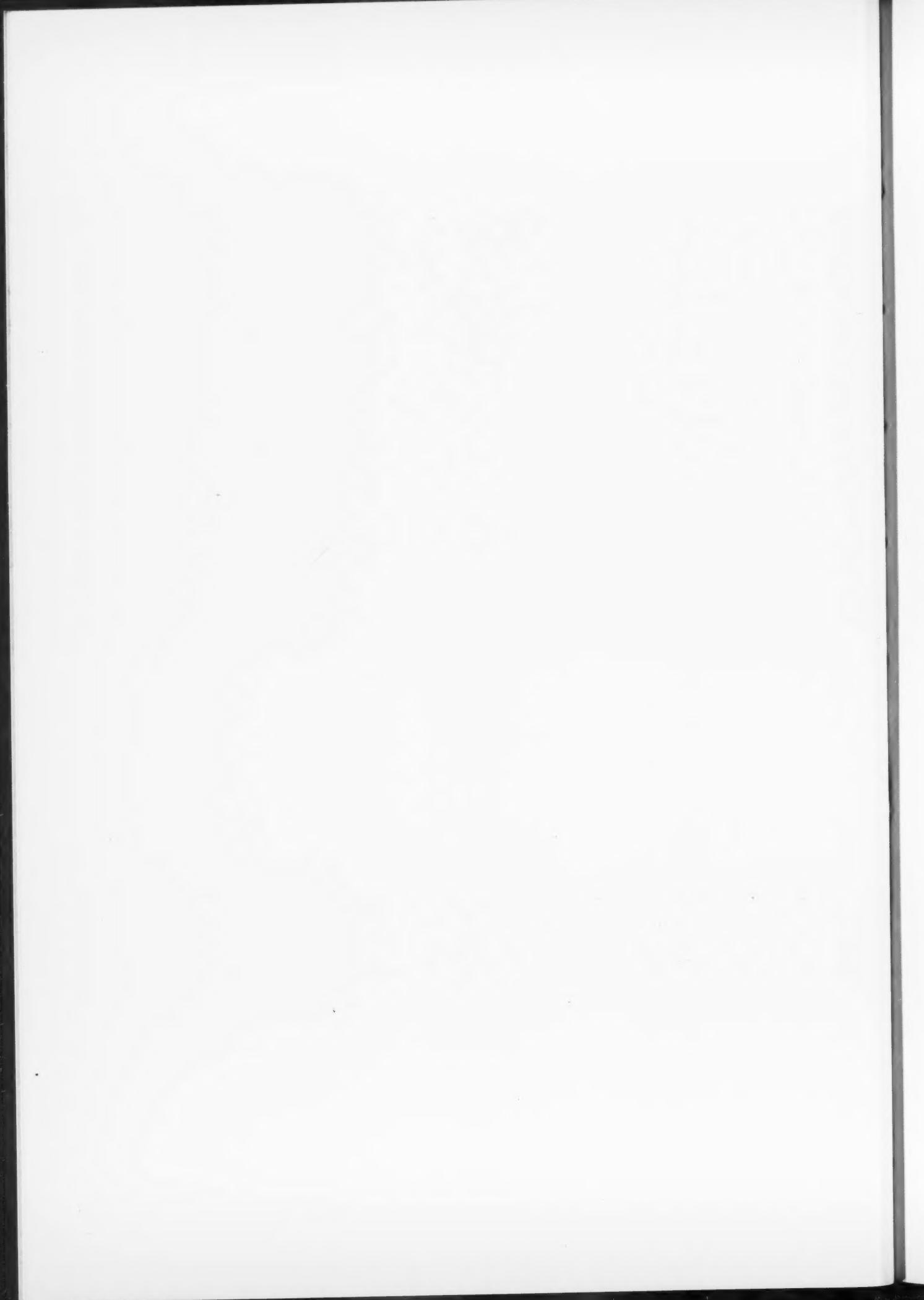




FIG. 3. DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR: ST. SEBASTIAN  
*Formerly in Dr. Stillwell's Collection, New York*





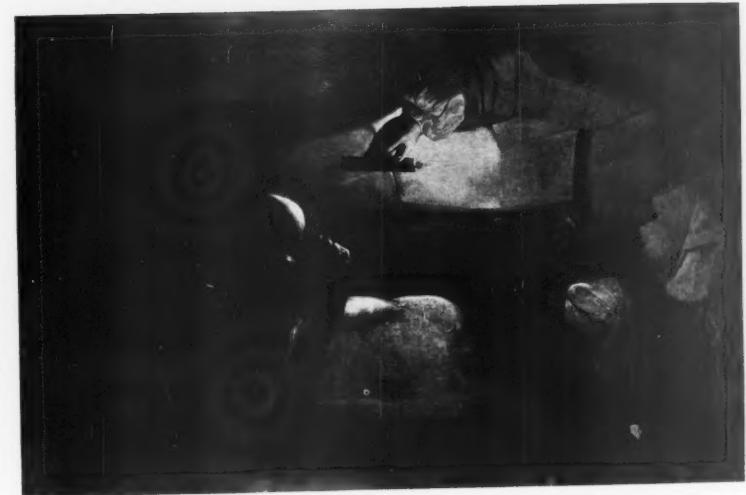
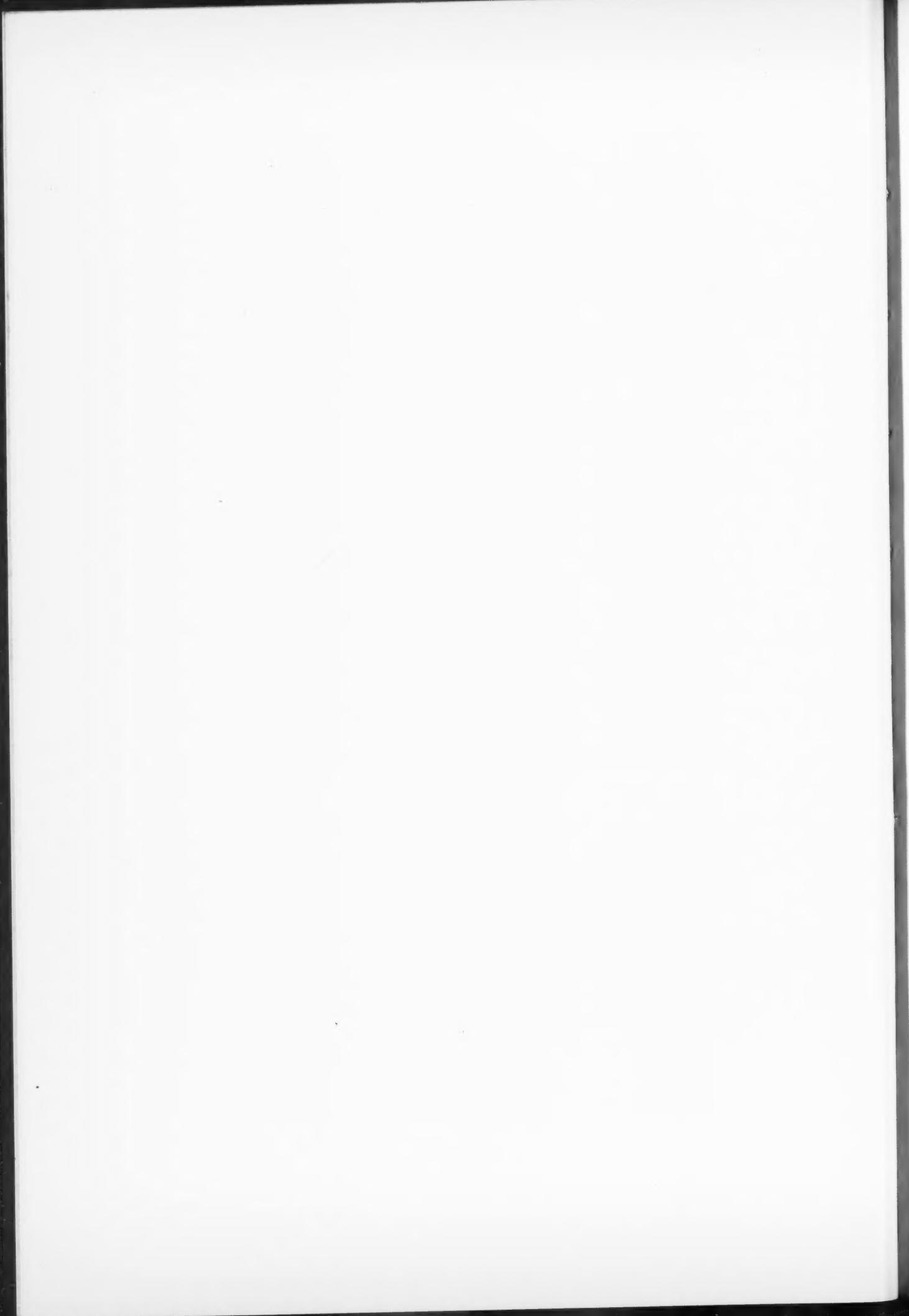


FIG. 4. DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR: NIGHT SCENE  
*Museum, Épinal*



FIG. 5. DU MESNIL DE LA TOUR: ST. PETER AND THE MAID  
*Museum, Nantes*

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nite and too individualized to permit of a surmise as to which painter of this particular school may have exercised a special influence on him. We are tempted to suggest Orazio Gentileschi and Rutilio Manetti, the foremost Tuscan exponents of the Caravaggio school, and a relationship to two engravings by Callot after Manetti (M. 65 and 66) seems to strengthen this assumption. This, however, is all mere surmise, needing more definite confirmation. It is noteworthy that there is no mention of Du Mesnil in the Italian sources.

Whether our surmise that Du Mesnil studied in Italy be correct, or whether his knowledge of the Caravaggio School derived from northern sources (Paris? the Netherlands?), it is certain that the genesis of his artistic development lay in Caravaggio and the Caravaggio School. His art, however, cannot be thus summarily dismissed, for it contains two novel and highly individual elements. First, the stern form of his unusual and relief-like composition, almost hard impression, is augmented by a conscious accentuation of straight lines. Second, a severe and individual color scale, in which a powerful vermillion, a glowing lilac and a light sulphur yellow predominate, applied in broad, very slightly modelled planes. These tones constitute a remarkably daring harmony for which we find no parallel among his contemporaries, although we are reminded of certain very modern experiments.

Another anachronism for seventeenth century France is the combination of a "low," that is naturalistic and thoroughly worldly approach in the treatment of religious themes with a noticeable sternness, even rigidity of style. The brothers Le Nain offer the only contemporary parallel. They are, however, in strong contrast to Du Mesnil in respect to their naturalistic style.

Neither contemporary French art with its strict canonical rules, nor Italian or Flemish painting offer a satisfactory analogy for the problem of Du Mesnil's attitude—with the exception of one single, and somewhat later master—Vermeer of Delft, who pursued similar goals in respect to line and color although wisely limiting himself, with a consequently greater mastery of his subject, to simple worldly themes.

It is unlikely that we can draw any direct connection between Du Mesnil and Vermeer, but it is indisputable that certain stylistic problems in regard to which the great Delft master differed so strikingly from his contemporaries were already foreshadowed by the earlier master from Lorraine.

It is possible that the inherent contradictions in Du Mesnil's style worked adversely in regard to his fertility, and his work produced, as it

was, in a quiet and remote spot seems to have found small and not particularly intelligent appreciation. If, however, his contemporaries saw in him nothing more than a clever specialist in chiaroscuro, our own day preoccupied with related style problems, is capable of a clearer, more sympathetic approach to the essential elements of his art. We can appreciate what this obscure provincial painter strove for rather than attained, and can accord him that sympathy which his earnest and independent efforts so richly merit.

#### LIST OF DU MESNIL'S WORKS

Épinal: Museum. Night Scene with Maid holding a Candle and Seated Man.  
Nantes: Museum. The Angel Appearing to St. Joseph. (signed.)  
Nantes: Museum. St. Peter and the Maid. (Signed and Dated, 1650), For identification of the signature compare with "Archiv für Kunst geschichte," by H. Voss, 1915, Plate 122.  
Formerly New York: Stillwell Collection. The Lamentation of St. Sebastian. Possibly identical with one of the Sebastian compositions mentioned in the early chronicles.  
Paris: Louvre. Adoration of the Child by the Shepherds. Acquired in 1926, and attributed to Du Mesnil by the writer of the present article.  
Rennes: Museum. The Birth of Christ. (Formerly attributed to Schaleken and Le Nain). See "Archiv für Kunst geschichte," 1915, for the attribution to Du Mesnil.  
The "Denial of Peter" in the Louvre, is falsely attributed to Du Mesnil, formerly attributed to Le Nain.

## A NEW RAPHAEL IN AMERICA

By WALTER HEIL

*Detroit, Michigan*

**E**NORMOUS prices in the art market do not always signify the highest artistic quality. Quality is but one of the factors which determine market value. Even in our own day, which lacks so decidedly the strong and unifying stylistical feeling of former periods — a fact which enables us to appreciate equally works of art of the most heterogeneous character, such as Dutch portraits and Chinese sculpture or Medieval miniatures and French Impressionist landscapes — we are still subject to fashion in our likes or dislikes of art. Fashion, however, in itself justified, also creates an increased demand for special things and often, therefore, prices which are exaggerated from the viewpoint of real artistic value. There is, furthermore, the provenance of an art object, the fact that it comes from this or that famous collection, which sometimes leads to a valuation not quite based upon esthetic merits proper.

Considering all this, it is all the more felicitous that in this instance a large sum was paid for a master work of the very greatest importance, not only for its immaculate "pedigree" but even more for its intrinsic artistic value. We refer to the Raphael Madonna known as the "great" Cowper Madonna, which recently passed from the English owner to the Mellon collection in Washington.

It is not necessary here to enlarge elaborately on this picture, which is signed and dated (1508) and has been described in practically all the publications on Raphael during the last few centuries. It might suffice to give some of the more important data only. The painting, belonging to the last phase of Raphael's stay in Florence, marks the point where, definitely forsaking the manner of his Umbrian period, sweet in the play of lines and simple in the arrangement of planes, the artist has reached, under the influence of Leonardo, Michelangelo and Fra Bartolommeo, that rich and monumental style which made him the great master of the Italian High Renaissance. As to the history of the painting, it was for centuries in the possession of the Niccolini family in Florence, from which in 1780 it was purchased by Lord Cowper, English Ambassador to the Court of Tuscany, in whose family it remained until this year.

What we want to stress here is the significance of the entry into this

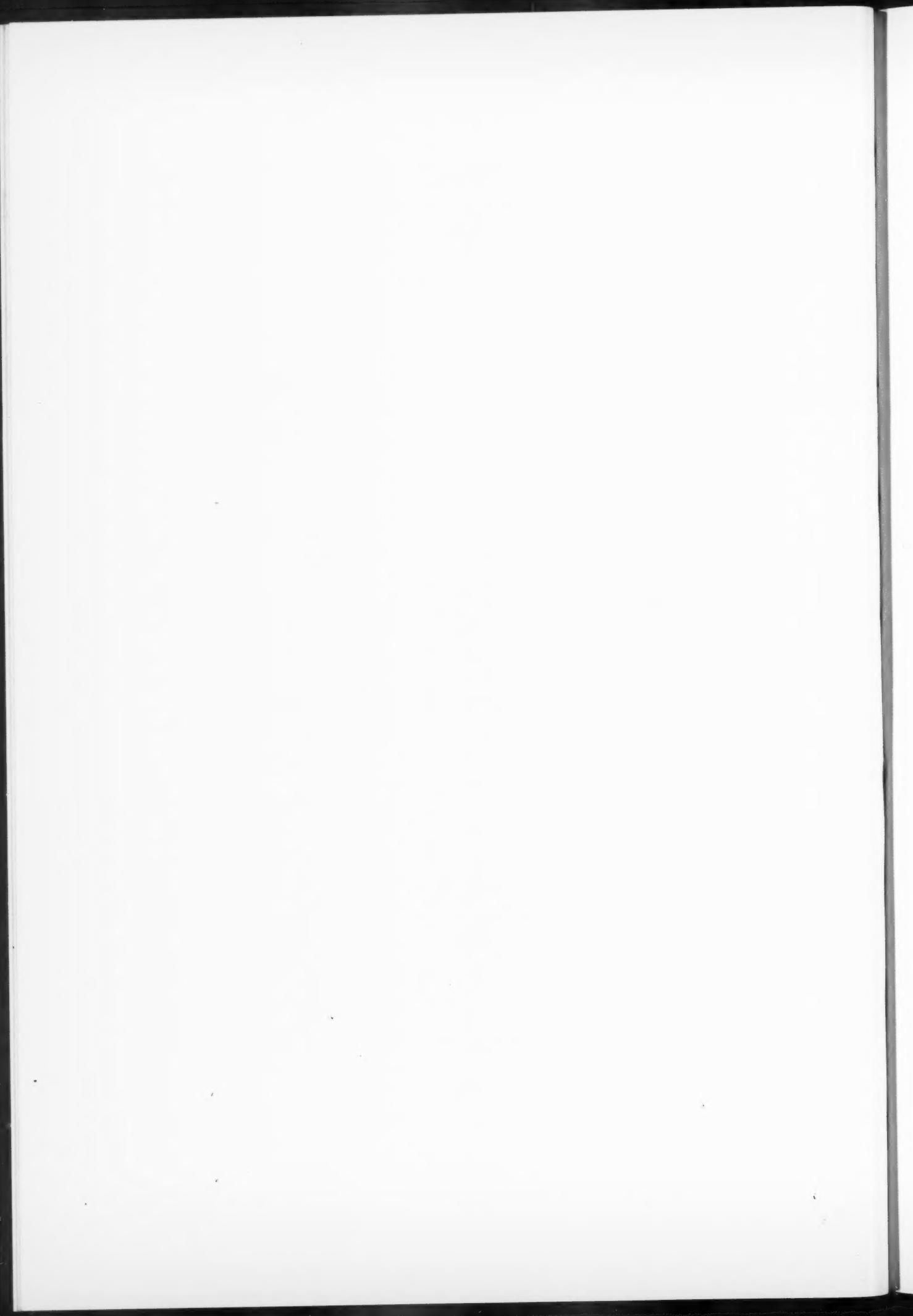
country of a masterwork like this Cowper Madonna. When visiting Europe one cannot help being depressed at the sight of the immense treasures of inalienable works of art in the great public collections and churches. "Never will any of our public or private collections be able to compete with these galleries. It is only the refuse of past centuries which comes to America." Well, this Raphael Madonna certainly is no "refuse." It is not only an authentic Raphael — there are not more than two<sup>1</sup> in this country that are without question by the master's hand — but a Raphael which can stand comparison with any of his most famous pictures in the great European collections. We, therefore, have every reason to congratulate Mr. Andrew Mellon for having secured it, and ourselves for having it as a most important addition to the art resources of the country.

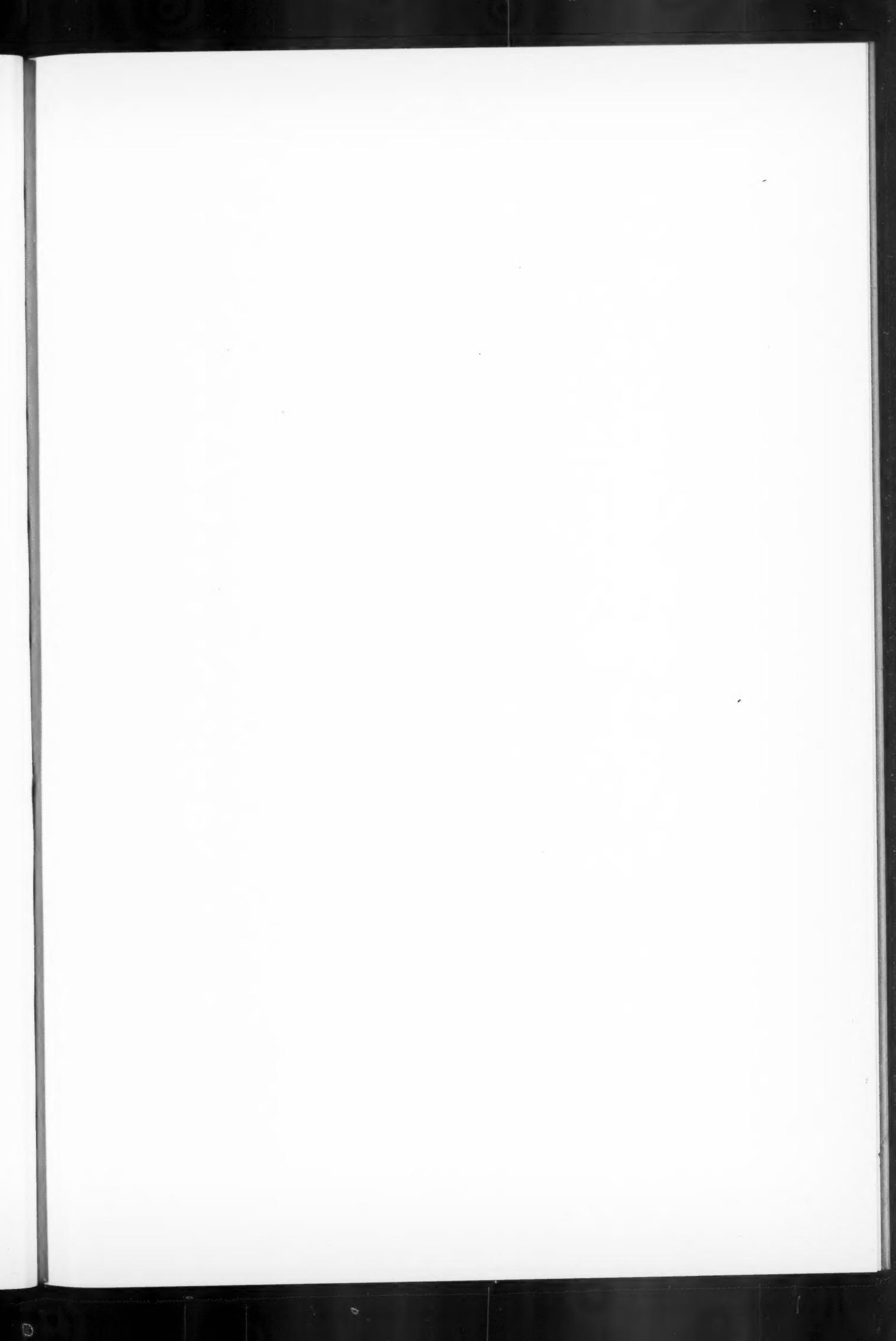
<sup>1</sup> "Little" Cowper Madonna, Widener Collection, Philadelphia; Virgin and Child Enthroned with Saints, The "Colonna Altarpiece," Metropolitan Museum, New York. Two parts of the predella belonging originally to the Colonna Altarpiece are now preserved in the Mackay collection, New York, and in the Gardner Museum, Boston.



RAPHAEL: MADONNA AND CHILD  
*Collection of Hon. Andrew W. Mellon*









ETERNAL ICE  
By Wm. H. SINGER, JR.



A WINTER NIGHT  
By Wm. H. SINGER, JR.



NORWEGIAN LANDSCAPES  
BY WILLIAM H. SINGER, JR.

By FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

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NOT every painter of landscape finds his inspiration in his native land or his technic in its schools. W. H. Singer is one of those who have not. Born in Pennsylvania he has lived in a remote corner of Norway for upward of twenty years. And, as sometimes happens, he has seemingly sensed more fully and more truly than most of the native painters the essential balance of strength and delicacy in Norwegian landscape. To express this in graphic representation he has evolved an individual technic derived from impressionistic sources which is capable of exquisite subtleties of hue that intrigue the eye. The basis of his design is founded on the elemental grandeur of the topography whereon he superimposes the immaterial beauty of exquisite traceries of form in subtle harmonies of hue. But however faithfully he pictures the Norwegian scene, the dominant characteristic of his art is the expression of a singularly personal reaction to its obvious outlines, so that all his finer canvases are records and accounts of moods and emotions that find echoes in other hearts. With calculated skill he builds the majesty of the mountains to emphasize the transitory loveliness of the starlight in a canvas like *A Winter Night*, and by means of a foreground of relative intimacy brings it close to the spectator. Indeed, the foreground is consciously exploited in his canvases and serves a real need with telling effect. He never allows it to become commonplace and its varied character is in keeping with what it introduces, whether an almost Oriental tracery of tree forms, silvery with snow against the frozen hills, or a misty haloed moonlight in the silence of the North.

Perhaps at first one thinks of his pictures as decorations, and they are truly decorative, but further than that the best of them are pure poetry and one or two have an almost epic grandeur. One is conscious, I think, more of the artist's mood than of his skill in looking at his finer pictures, and whether it be blithe or grave it is never sentimental or grotesque. He does not mix man with nature. His landscapes are devoid of figures, man or beast, or of habitations; it is nature and emotion, simple and significant. The tracery of a tree-form in a foreground was not primarily undertaken as an added touch of beauty one senses but rather as a necessary element of graphic expression to forcibly ful-

fill the intention of the design as a whole or as a sensitive symbol emphasizing the intention of a picture whose forms, colors and composition would lack definite meaning without. Nor does he trouble himself or his spectator with any of the unnecessary and generally unmeaning trivialities of detail, even in foreground, which too often encumber landscape art. An expanse of high ground, snow covered; one or two, perhaps a small group of trees; a single towering peak or a rugged line of mountain-top—and over all the dark veil of evening or the light veil of snow—above all a sky serene, clouded or lit by moon or stars, that is the picture.

So long as one writes of the material, visible portion of a painter's product, his design, handling of line and mass, his sense of rhythm and balance, one encounters little trouble in making his meaning clear. Unfortunately, just so soon as he passes beyond these matters and technic, he must rely more or less upon an intuitive understanding on the part of his audience of the impalpable—moods, influences, feelings, emotions. And because human intelligence is so imperfectly synchronized, the best that he can do is to translate a work of art into the meaning it has for him in the hope that he may discover its meaning to others. The excuse for so doing, if any is necessary, is the knowledge that there are many who *feel* but without in any real sense understanding a picture. And so whatever a work of art means to one to whom it has meaning must be of some interest, whether little or great, to others. The thought that moves me whenever I think of Singer's art is the persistence with which it punctuates the still, frozen vistas with evidences of life, suspended if you will, but nevertheless life—and beautiful as true life always is.

